

Rev. and S. M. M. Marshon  
AND

Mary Edmundo Marshon  
HIS WIFE



STEPHEN L. MERSHON

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*"Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother"*

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Mershon, Stephen L.,  
Reverend Stephen L. Mersho  
and Mary Talmage Mershon,







Reverend Stephen L. Mershon

AND

Mary Talmage Mershon

HIS WIFE



STEPHEN L. MERSON

*“Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother”*

To  
REVEREND STEPHEN L. MERSHON CHAPTER  
EAST HAMPTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
EAST HAMPTON, LONG ISLAND

Please accept this token of a son's very deep appreciation of the respect and affection shown in the adoption by your Chapter of my father's name, Rev. Stephen L. Mershon, a faithful and devout minister of the historic church you so diligently and faithfully serve.

As one of the unbroken series of eminently faithful pastors of your Church, my father and my beloved and consecrated mother, in devout cooperation together, spiritually ministered to many of its present members and friends and to many more of your and my loved ones who are now with them both in glory.

“Blest be the tie that binds  
Our hearts in christian love,  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
Is like to that above.”

Montclair, N. J.

STEPHEN L. MERSHON

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## LUMINOUS LIVES

The author presents this simple memorial of his father and mother as a privately issued companion volume to his earlier tribute to the parents of his beloved and now glorified wife, contained in "Mystic Voices, an Interpretation of Nature."

The latter transcribes messages of comfort and peace relayed from the beauties and traditions of the old colonial home and village church where the author found his bride.

It was there he first met his God-fearing, Christ-loving and happy-spirited future father-in-law and mother-in-law with his own beloved fiancée, worshipping in the rural kirk and displaying in their consecrated lives the heavenly beauty and Christ-like charm that sanctified their old colonial homestead.

Its windows were always wide open toward the new Jerusalem. Its walls enclosed a family altar of joyous faith. Its portals extended a whole-hearted welcome alike to rich and poor, in joy or sorrow, who sought a benediction of holy calm and heavenly rest in that sanctified home.

"When the doors were shut \* \* \* \*  
Jesus came and stood in the midst,  
and saith unto them, Peace be unto  
you." (John 20:19)

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1.)

Youth-time memories, unity of life in holy wedlock and a combined faith in a blessed immortality in heavenly mansions, were tenderly united as wife and I, before we were temporarily separated by her translation to heavenly places, sang together

"Home Sweet Home,  
There is no place like home."

No man hath seen God  
at any time,  
nor  
Hath any man ever approached  
in  
Holiness of character,  
Purity of spirit,  
Beauty of life,  
The Son of God.

Yet  
When I think of my father,  
the  
Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon,  
I think of Jesus Christ;  
and  
When I think of my mother,  
Mary Talmage Mershon,  
I think of the Holy Spirit.

When  
I think of them as a united parentage  
I think of God.

Sarah Lyon Mershon,  
the sainted "Grandma Mershon"  
to the children in the parsonage;  
likewise so called by the members  
of each of my late father's parishes,  
is visioned amidst the splendors of a  
glorious spiritual vista.

Thus we have an answer to our Savior's prayer;

"I in them and Thou in me that they  
may be made perfect in one; and that  
the world may know that Thou hast sent  
Me and hath loved them as Thou hast  
loved me." (John 17:23)

## THE HOME

“O happy home where two in heart united  
In holy faith and blessed hope are one,  
Whom death a little while alone divideth,  
And cannot end the union here begun!  
O happy home, whose little ones are given  
Early to thee in humble faith and prayer,  
To Thee, their Friend, who from the heights of Heaven  
Guides them, and guards with more than mother’s care!”

“O happy home, where each one serves Thee, lowly  
Whatever his appointed work may be,  
Till every common task seems great and holy,  
When it is done, O Lord, as unto Thee!  
O happy home, where Thou art loved the dearest,  
Thou loving Friend and Savior of our race,  
And where among the guests there never cometh  
One who can hold such high and honored place.”

“O happy home where Thou art not forgotten  
Where joy is overflowing, full and free,  
O happy home, where every wounded spirit  
Is brought, Physician, Comforter, to Thee,—  
Until at last, when earth’s day’s-work is ended,  
All meet Thee in the blessed home above,  
From whence Thou camest, where Thou hast ascended,  
Thou everlasting home of peace and love.”

\* \* \* \*

“For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth and friends above,  
For gentle thoughts and mild;  
Lord of all, to Thee we raise  
This our hymn of grateful praise.”

# Reverend Stephen L. Mershon

AND

# Mary Talmage Mershon

HIS WIFE

My father, the late Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, formerly pastor of the Presbyterian Church at East Hampton, Long Island, was a graduate in 1850 of Princeton College, now Princeton University and of Princeton Seminary in 1854. He was a man of fine intellectual culture, indomitable energy, affable in disposition, with a keen sense of humor and of strong personal convictions, influence and will-power. His profound knowledge of the Bible, literature, history, human nature and his Christlike sympathy with humanity constituted the magnetic field in which he displayed the magnetism of the pure and unalterable gospel of Jesus Christ which he so faithfully and fearlessly preached and by which he consistently lived.

I remember when he would hold me, a little fellow, on his lap and tell me wonderful stories of his life experiences, the historic past, the wonders of nature all about me and of God the Father as revealed in Jesus Christ. I especially remember his telling me that one of his ancestors was on the staff of King Henry of Navarre.

Somehow, the Huguenot blood in me responded to the glowing accounts given by my father of those heroic days when his ancestor took part in that great conflict for religious liberty and individual freedom. These emotions became transformed into lasting impressions when on one occasion he took down from the shelves of his extensive library the works of Lord Macaulay and had me commit to memory

the account of the Battle of Ivry, in which the intrepid King Henry gave command to his followers:

“Press where ye see my white plume shine amidst the ranks  
of war,  
And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.”

Somehow my youthful enthusiasm flamed to its fullest limitations as I visioned my father's ancestor on the staff of King Henry, following his sovereign in that dashing charge for mental, moral and spiritual freedom.

“Oh! was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,  
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?  
For our God hath crushed the tyrant, our God hath raised  
the slave,  
And mocked the council of the wise, and the valor of the  
brave.  
Then glory to His holy name, from whom all glories are;  
And glory to our sovereign lord, King Henry of Navarre.”

All students of history are acquainted with the dire consequences incident to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes with the cruel migration of the flower of French culture to other countries and the extended settlements of Huguenot refugees in the colonies of America.

Henri Mershon, of Normandy, with his son Henry, in about the year 1685 A.D. sailed for America to explore the new lands on this side of the sea to determine their adaptability as a place of settlement for members of the Mershon (Marchand) families in their contemplated flight to the new colonies. They visited New York City, Staten Island and the adjacent settlements. The father thereupon left his boy, Henry, then about 13 years of age, to await his return to America. The father sailed for France and upon his arrival there, he chartered a vessel, gathering scattered members of the Mershon family from various districts in France until he had secured a sufficient number of passengers to reach the ship's

capacity as refugees to America. With high hopes and great expectations they set sail from port and vanished from human sight. In other words, unseen, untraced, and thereafter unheard from, they doubtless found their final resting place in the harbor of silences beneath the sea.

The boy, Henry, who had been left by his father in America is the Henry Mershon, historically known as the progenitor of the Mershon family in America and is the one in whose honor the Henry Mershon Association has been organized under the laws of New Jersey. He is the progenitor from whom my father, the Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, descended.

The boy, Henry, who will be hereinafter referred to as Henry, 2nd, was born in France about 1672 A.D. Left to his own resources by the tragedy of the sea, he, after some prospecting about, finally settled at Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, in New Jersey, where he died on September 20, 1738. He was buried in the Lawrenceville Great Cemetery where a giant boulder with a bronze tablet has been recently erected by his descendants as a memorial to mark his resting place.

Henry, 2nd, was a man of outstanding rugged character, the incarnation of the principles for which his Huguenot ancestors and heroic father suffered and when necessary died. He was a pillar in the church at Lawrenceville, then Maidenhead.

Henry, 3rd, a son of Henry, 2nd, was born in 1696. He settled on a farm received by him from his father and was married first to Mary Yard, of Trenton, New Jersey, in 1728 by whom he had three sons, William, Joseph and Benjamin. He was married the second time in 1739 to Ann Major, by whom he had one son, Henry, 4th.

It is interesting to note how the name Henry appears in each of the above succeeding generations in America. Is it not possible and, in fact, very prob-

able that a further investigation of the Mershon family record in France will disclose the likewise adoption of the name Henry (Henri) in each prior generation back to that of the Mershon who, as a member of the royal staff, probably named his son Henri in honor of "his sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre," on whose military staff he served?

William Mershon, a son of Henry, 3rd, married Sarah Titus about February 27, 1764. They lived on land inherited from his father near Lawrenceville. They had six children, Andrew, Isaac, Benjamin, Job, William Titus and Anne.

In this brief sketch, it is impossible to follow the record of each descendant. That we must leave for the general biographer. For the present, therefore, we confine ourselves within the line of lineal descent to the Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, who with his wife, Mary Talmage Mershon, are the subjects of this treatise. Our special interest centers in the fifth child of William and Sarah Titus Mershon, whose name was William Titus Mershon. By the terms of his father's will the son, William Titus Mershon, was bequeathed a plantation in Hopewell township, New Jersey.

This son is elsewhere generally referred to only as Titus, his mother's family name. The records show that his full baptismal name was William Titus Mershon, a combination of the Christian name of his father William, and his mother's family name (Sarah), Titus.

William Titus Mershon was born at Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, August 22, 1756, and married, as his first wife, Nancy Ann Weedon, daughter of Nathaniel Weedon of Franklin County, Kentucky. He died in Laurel County, Kentucky, March 11, 1842, where his body now rests in a fully identified and marked grave. His first wife, Nancy Ann Weedon

*to include in booklet in later date of these records*

Mershon, was born May 24, 1741, and died June 16, 1813. He had removed from New Jersey first to Morgantown, Virginia, and soon thereafter into Eastern Kentucky, settling at Mershon's Crossroads in what is now Laurel County. The children of this first marriage were:

1. Sally Mershon, born December 8, 1797. She married a Mr. Aikman and moved to Kansas at the close of the Civil War. They settled near El Dorado, Kansas, one of the sons becoming a judge in the courts of that state and another a prominent lawyer at its bar.

2. Betty Mershon was born October 21, 1800. She married Samuel Black. Many of her descendants now live in Laurel County, Kentucky.

3. Polly Mershon was born November 30, 1802, and is said to have remained unmarried.

4. William Mershon (the father of the Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, the subject of this brochure) was born February 7, 1805. He married Sarah Lyon of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, and after a two-year stay at Mershon's Crossroads where their son, Stephen, was born, they moved to New Brunswick, New Jersey, where two daughters were born to them as will be further referred to in this review.

It is interesting to note that this son, William, was given his father's first Christian name (William), but not his father's middle name (Titus) which name, William, was also that of his grandfather, William Mershon, the husband of Sarah Titus.

5. Nancy Mershon was born May 10, 1807. She married John Moren. Her son, William T. Moren, born in 1824, became a judge and an important factor in the early development of Laurel County, while her third son became a physician of great prominence in Louisville, Kentucky.



6. Weedon Mershon was born July 23, 1812. He established a large blacksmith shop in London, Kentucky, operating the same about the time of the Civil War, where he was joined in the enterprise by Mr. Aikman, his brother-in-law, the husband of Sally Mershon. It is understood that Weedon removed to Texas. One of his sons, Arthur Mershon, later returned to London, Laurel County, Kentucky, and attended the old Laurel Seminary located there.

William Titus Mershon, the father of the above family, and the grandfather of the Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, married as his second wife in 1832 Elizabeth Davis, by whom he had no children. He was a very noted character during the Revolutionary War. He was constantly active therein as the official records show in the defence of the colonies. In military operations, he crossed the Delaware River on three different expeditions. On one such occasion he was with General George Washington in his famous crossing, prior to the Battle of Princeton.

In that battle, William Titus Mershon's shoulder was broken by the blow of a musket and he was wounded three times by British bayonets. He fought in the Battle of Springfield, New Jersey; was on guard in New Brunswick and engaged at other military points. The blood of his ancestor in the conflict for human liberty under King Henry of Navarre ran true to form in this American patriot on the various fields of battle in the American Revolution. By a remarkable coincidence in the same New Jersey area of Revolutionary conflict for American liberty, there fought as William Titus Mershon's comrades-in-arms, the renowned Captain Goyan McCoy, the grandfather of Sarah Lyon of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, she who became the wife of William Titus Mershon's son William; also Colonel Thomas Talmage, the grandfather of Mary Talmage; she who became the wife of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon,

the subject of this sketch, who was the son of William Mershon and Sarah Lyon, his wife—the son and daughter-in-law of William Titus Mershon.

We will now find our way in this narrative to Basking Ridge, New Jersey, in the year 1808. This charming valley and forest-crowned mountain were then sparsely settled, but were possessed by a sturdy population of outstanding character and highly representative of the best elements in American colonial life. A mother is to be then seen on a beautiful afternoon, wending her way along the trail over the crest of Basking Ridge carrying a little babe in her arms. This ridge over which she is tracing her steps derived its name from the fact that bears in the surrounding woods frequently resorted thereto and basked on the crest in the warmth of the sun; hence the name Basking Ridge. The mother referred to, coming to a stile in a rail fence erected to limit a cattle range on the mountain top, halted an instant to lift her baby over the stile. She was suddenly conscious of what felt to her to be the hands of a man, heavily placed on her shoulders. Turning her face about she looked into the features of an upstanding bear, which having followed her silently along the trail was now standing up and looking into the upturned face of her child. That baby was Sarah Lyon, who became the mother of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon.

Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon in his statement in "Giger's Memoirs" in Princeton University said (1857) that among his relatives who had attended Princeton College was David Lyon, an *uncle* who died the same year (1813) in which he (David) graduated; also another David Lyon of the class of 1836, a *cousin*, who at that time (1857) was a clergyman in the State of New York.

Reverend David Lyon, of the Princeton Class of 1836, in his later statement in "Giger's Memoirs" in

Princeton University, said that of his relatives who had attended Princeton College was David Lyon, "who died more than forty years ago," and that Mary Lyon, the deceased David Lyon's sister, then lived with David T. Talmage, Bound Brook, New Jersey; also that his *cousin*, S. L. Mershon, had graduated from Princeton College. This report by David Lyon was made after both he and Stephen Lyon Mershon had graduated.

As Reverend David Lyon of the class of 1836 was a cousin of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon and David Lyon of the class of 1813 was an uncle of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon, then Mary, the sister of David Lyon of the Class of 1813 was Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon's aunt. Therefore, Sarah Lyon Mershon, the mother of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon was the sister of David and Mary Lyon who were the son and daughter of Captain David Lyon who married Rachel McCoy on November 10, 1777, and which Rachel was the daughter of Capt. Goyan McCoy of Revolutionary fame. Capt. McCoy's daughter, Mary, married Col. Thomas Talmage of the Revolution, from whom their granddaughter, my mother, Mary Talmage Mershon, inherited the name Mary.

The above explanation is so fully made regarding the inter-relationship between these members of the Lyon family because there appears to be certain incongruities or conflict in dates regarding them in the "Giger Memoirs" and Princeton College records. There appears an error in those records of two years in the graduation of David Lyon and also confusion or uncertainty as to the date of the birth of Rachel, the daughter of David Lyon who married Samuel Ogden; also, the failure to record in the Princeton records the birth of Sarah Lyon.

In 1857 Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon in his report in the "Giger's Memoirs" stated:

“On my father’s side I am lineally descended from the Huguenots of France. They originally settled in New Jersey, not far from Lambertville (typographical error; should read Lawrenceville). On my mother’s side we can trace the family back to the McCoys of Scotland. One of the same line is now Lord of the Highlands. Captain McCoy, my great grandfather, served through the whole of the Revolution, and resided at Basking Ridge, New Jersey.”

Capt. Goyan McCoy is buried in the Basking Ridge Cemetery.

During the Revolutionary period and subsequent thereto, the McCoy, Lyon and Talmage families living in close proximity to each other were highly representative of the best elements in provincial, state and local affairs.

These families were intimately acquainted and by inter-marriages were closely related to each other. They were very active in the political development of Democracy, in the intellectual and especially in the religious culture of the people.

About 1825, a brilliant young man by the name of William Mershon from Mershon’s Crossroads in Eastern Kentucky, a son and namesake of William Titus Mershon of Revolutionary fame, appeared in the social life of Basking Ridge. The social circles in that community were somewhat limited and the presence of the stranger was cordially welcomed. Tradition says that he bore some special commission or was the bearer of important government dispatches relating to public interests on the Canadian border. During his temporary stay in Basking Ridge, he became acquainted with Sarah Lyon, one of the very popular and highly esteemed young women of that community who introduced him in social circles as “the brave Kentuck.” They became engaged. Upon his return to Basking Ridge after performance of his public mission, they were married. He then

escorted his bride to Mershon's Crossroads in the frontier Wilderness of Eastern Kentucky.

Facilities for transportation in those days were very crude. Certain highways were fairly good, but far more of them were exceedingly poor. The bride who became my grandmother gave me very vivid accounts of her rugged trip to her new Kentucky home, in the traversing of mountains, following of trails and the fording of streams. They remained at Mershon's Crossroads in Laurel County, Kentucky, from about 1826 to 1829, where the public records show he owned land and paid taxes.

My grandmother frequently told me of her experiences in that wilderness, threaded by the principal Indian trail from Ohio to the Kentucky Salt Licks, and extending on, farther south; also, of the trail east and west leading through the mountain ranges to Virginia. Many and many a time, she said, the Indians on their migrations in bands from one section to another and on their hunting excursions would camp near her home. She would, at times, see their campfires and hear their voices in the forest when the men of her household were away in the performance of their duties and she was alone with my father, a small babe, in her arms.

In the year 1829, she and her husband, with their son, Stephen (my father) then only about two years of age, returned to New Brunswick, New Jersey, where they settled down and remained from 1829 to 1836. During that period two daughters, Fanny and Margaret, were born to them. These little girls lived only a few years each. About this time their mother also met with the loss of her husband, my grandfather, William Mershon. The burial lot sacred to the stricken mother was in the plot on which the Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick was erected and now stands. It is said the bodies interred in that church yard were all removed, upon the enlarge-

ment of the Church, to another burying ground, the location of which is well known, but the markers and records of which unhappily have been largely destroyed. The dates of the births and decease of those referred to as buried therein are not now obtainable. Col. Thomas Talmage of Revolutionary fame, elsewhere referred to herein, was for a long time an Elder in that church and was buried in God's Acre at Somerville, New Jersey, in which town he resided in the later years of his life.

"I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls  
The burial ground God's Acre! It is just;  
It consecrates each grave within its walls,  
And breathes a benison o'er the sleeping dust."

Certain occurrences in the activities of the son, Stephen, when as a little fellow in New Brunswick he was just able to run about on his two feet, indicate the influence of heredity dominating his small body and its urge along the lines of scouting, taking personal hazards and the exhibition of pioneer qualities incident to the times in which he was born.

He, one day when hardly free from his mother's apron strings, being suddenly missed was found to have gone to the attic of their home, climbed a ladder to an open scuttle, crawled up on the roof of the house and perched astride on the peak of the roof, was looking down upon the pedestrians in the street below. His distracted mother entertained him from a distance with interesting stories until a rescuer, with great difficulty, followed his trail and seized him before he could roll to the street.

On another occasion, the little fellow, quite unnoticed overheard a conversation about a man who was stricken with small-pox at a house below them on the same street. Suddenly the boy was missing. A search revealed him standing in the room beside the man with that dreadful disease, investigating the situation with wide-open eyes.

Stephen's father had brought with him from Kentucky to New Brunswick a handsome, fiery Kentucky-bred horse. This high-spirited animal was one of the choice steeds in the community. Such a situation immediately demanded the boy's attention. The young hopeful was discovered by his mother standing between the back feet of the horse, scraping its legs with a currycomb. The horse was tossing its head about and constantly looking back at the boy, while the mother, almost paralyzed with fear, stood at a distance in mental distraction, wondering how to solve the problem. By promise of candy and the offer of such other inducements of an attractive character as would appeal to a boyish mind, little Stephen was induced to discontinue his efforts in grooming the horse and found his way in safety to his mother's arms.

Mrs. Sarah Lyon Mershon, so sadly bereft and overwhelmed by her sorrows in New Brunswick, returned in 1836 with her boy to her old home in Baskingridge where they remained until 1841.

She was a woman of great sprightliness of disposition and intellectual refinement; possessing social qualifications of a high order, with a cheerful but deep religious character. As a mother she, from her boy's infancy, possessed the one supreme ambition that he should upon maturity enter the Christian Ministry. With that in view, she brought to bear upon him the best influences of her superb Christian character. To these he openly and at all times responded, until she as a happy mother later realized in his notable career the fulfillment of that ambition to which she had devoted her energies and offered up her prayers.

It was the mother's expectation that her boy, Stephen, could receive his preparatory education for college in the Baskingridge Academy located in her native town, which Academy had, at that time, a

very high standing as a preparatory institution. This Academy, however, closed in 1840, whereupon in the following year she and her son, Stephen, removed to Blawmburg, a village adjacent to Somerville.

It is traditionally understood, but without definite authority from the records, that the son, Stephen, was privately tutored by the Reverend James R. Talmage, at that time the pastor of the Church of Blawmburg.

Pastor James R. Talmage was the oldest brother of Mary Talmage, the daughter of Sheriff David T. Talmage of Somerset County. She was a sister of Reverend T. Dewitt Talmage and as previously stated became the wife of Reverend Stephen Lyon Mershon.

After two years of tutorage in Blawmburg, Stephen with his mother moved to Somerville, New Jersey, where in 1844 to 1846 he attended the Somerville Academy, an institution then of wide reputation for high standards of instruction. There, under Reverend John L. Lee, and Gilbert Pillsbury, Stephen qualified in 1846 for admission and entered Princeton College.

A strange contrast is noticeable between the preparatory system prevailing in those times with those of the present day. Small, excellent Academies with qualified and God-minded instructors gave direct personal attention to the individual and educational training of each particular student. Small institutions of that character scattered throughout the States brought the young students in direct contact with, and under the influence of the best Christian minds of the period. We are not, therefore, surprised at the thoroughly grounded and well-developed educational culture of that day. It seems to have been in strange contrast with the "quantity production" of this "machine age" wherein "standardized methods" of intellectual training, though



wide spread, are not uniformly profound or considerate of differing mental tastes and qualifications of the respective students.

Industrial conditions in that period, like educational methods, greatly differed from those of the present day. Boots and shoes were handmade, men's clothing was made by tailoresses, and blacksmith shops in every community were a necessity. As Stephen and his mother were alone in his academic period, she carried on a tailoress establishment in Somerville as their visible means of support.

Being admitted to Princeton College in 1846, Stephen remained there, first in the college; thereafter in the Seminary until his graduation in 1854, excepting one academic year—1850 to 1851, when he taught for that year in the Academy at Westchester, Pennsylvania. This he did for the purpose of meeting his collegiate expenses.

This college student of intense filial affection refused to permit his mother by her industry to carry the cost of his education at Princeton, and persisted in his own self-support. For a time, during the summer months, he worked in a blacksmith shop. I have in my possession a fine pancake turner wrought by him out of iron over a forge and on an anvil in a country shop, which handmade utensil he sent to his mother as a token of his mastery in the iron industry.

It is strange how frequently the common experiences in the menial drudgeries of life become later on potent factors in life's intellectual and spiritual triumphs. Many years after this training in iron work when a Princeton student, my father as the successful pastor of a prosperous church took me, a small boy, with him to have a noble young horse he owned shod at a blacksmith's shop in his parish. The blacksmith was a powerful, rugged, outspoken atheist who had little, in fact no use for clergymen.

As the blacksmith was shoeing the horse, my father remarked, "I think you are giving the wrong cast to that shoe. I am afraid the horse will interfere."

The atheist blacksmith, putting down the horse's hoof, faced my father and said, "Tell me what a preacher knows about shoeing a horse."

My father quietly replied, "If you will exchange your blacksmith's apron for my preacher's coat, I will show you what a preacher knows about shoeing a horse."

The apron was delivered. My father stepped to the forge, reheated the shoe, hammered it on the anvil, gave it a different cast and set the shoe. The blacksmith, looking on with astonishment, exclaimed, "at last I have found a preacher that is good for something."

A strong friendship developed between the pastor and the blacksmith. Soon the minister had won the mechanic over to faith in Jesus Christ, and the blacksmith became a staunch, outspoken follower of the Master until he was called to meet his Lord.

How happy it was that Stephen Lyon Mershon had learned blacksmithing as he worked his way through college and seminary. How little we understand the spiritual values attached to the faithful performance of duty in the humdrum experiences of our daily life.

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door,  
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;  
Then looking in, I saw upon the floor  
Old hammers, worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I  
"To wear and batter all these hammers so?"  
"Just one," said he, and then, with twinkling eye,  
"The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

"And so, thought I, the anvil of God's Word,  
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon;  
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,  
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone."

Some years ago I was met by an elderly lady at the close of a church service in Montclair, New Jersey, who said to me,

“When your father, Stephen L. Mershon, was a student in Princeton he was a very active worker in the old church at Lawrenceville,” only a short distance from Princeton.

That is the church of which Henry, 2nd, was an elder and near to which his body rests and about which many of the Mershons are buried.

The recital relating to my father’s life in Princeton reminds me of an experience I had in Evansville, Indiana, at the close of a ministerial meeting, which was addressed by me, a layman. An elderly gentleman approached me, placing his hands on my shoulders and looking me intently in the face, said, “Your name is Stephen L. Mershon. Did you ever hear of a Stephen L. Mershon in Princeton College?”

I replied, “I have the great honor of being his son and bearing his name.”

He responded, “You do not know what a father you had! When he was in Princeton College and Seminary there was never a discouraged student or one taken ill but that fellow found him out and befriended him. He seemed to be the friend of every student that needed a friend. He was a classmate of mine.”

The Reverend Stephen L. Mershon was called to the pastorate of the East Hampton, Long Island, Presbyterian Church several months prior to his graduation from Princeton Theological Seminary. In his own words:

“The young student hesitated. He had not yet worn the armor of one who must lead in the conflict against the enemies of God; and to stand in the pulpit of a Buel, of a Lyman Beecher, and of one with the intellectual ability of E. C. Wines, he felt to be no light thing. It was with fear and trembling an affirmative reply was

written. On the 7th of January I came among you, and sat writing till the midnight hour to complete my second sermon that I might preach to you the next day. After much persuasion I consented to remain for three Sabbaths. The result was, at a large parish meeting you unan- imously chose me as your pastor, adding fifty dollars to the amount which you had given my predecessor. This compliment gave the youth- ful candidate more assurance than anything that was done at that meeting."

The church at East Hampton was at that time larger than the then largest Presbyterian Church in the State of New Jersey.

Upon assuming his duties as pastor of that church he took with him to East Hampton a bride, Mary Talmage of Bound Brook, New Jersey, the grand- daughter of Major Thomas Talmage, of Revolution- ary history and the daughter of David Talmage, sheriff of Somerset County. The eminent Dr. Cham- bers, pastor of the Collegiate Church of New York City, said "Major Thomas Talmage was for an entire generation the strongest pillar in the 2nd Church of Somerville."

Dr. Chambers also said of Catherine Van Nest Talmage, the mother of Mary Talmage, "She was the most godly woman the writer ever knew. A wonder to so many for the strength of her faith, the pro- foundness of her gracious experience and the uni- form spirituality of her mind."

Of both parents of Mary Talmage he also added, "Hand in hand they pursued their pilgrimage through this world, presenting an example of piety such as is not often seen."

Four of Mary Talmage's brothers were ministers of the gospel; Reverend James R. Talmage, Reverend John Van Nest Talmage, the head of the Reformed Church Mission in Amoy, China, Reverend Goyan Talmage (named after his uncle who was named

after their ancestor, Capt. Goyan McCoy of the Revolution) and Reverend T. DeWitt Talmage.

She was the niece of the profound Reverend Jehiel Talmage, and also of Reverend Samuel K. Talmage, President of Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia. A remarkable account of Mary Talmage Mershon's parentage is contained in "The Almond Tree in Blossom," a sermon in book form preached by Reverend T. DeWitt Talmage in 1865 in memory of David and Catherine Talmage, his and Mary Talmage's father and mother. Mary Talmage Mershon seemed to possess in her soul and constantly radiate in her life the divine spirit of these kindred in the service of God. She was the prototype of her godly mother, true to the faith of her father and the duplicate of her sister Kate who became Mrs. Catherine Talmage Cone of Bound Brook, New Jersey, a woman of remarkable influence in the religious life in that community.

Reverend and Mrs. Stephen Lyon Mershon's ministry at East Hampton continued from 1854 to 1866 and was replete with incidents of great interest and abounding success. They, with his noble mother, Sarah Lyon, then "Grandma Mershon," were so beloved in the parish to which they ministered that during the third year of his ministration, when he became very seriously ill, his East Hampton people suspended his pastoral responsibilities for the entire year with an increase of salary. When several physicians announced at a desperate crisis in his illness that he could not recover and would never preach again, the community with one voice declared "a day of fasting and prayer" and assembled in their place of worship. Refraining from food, they appealed their case to the Great Physician. It was said "he cannot live the night out" and the watchers saw him sink into profound coma, but his people, wife and mother, were praying. Early next morning messen-

gers sped from house to house. "Mr. Mershon is much better, he will live," and he did live in answer to prayer.

Eight children were born to them in East Hampton, and one later in Connecticut. One son, David Van Nest, passed away at less than two years of age and is buried in the quaint and beautiful old Colonial burying ground located in the heart of East Hampton. The scene which occurred at the time of the boy's decease throws a beautiful light upon the character of the pastor and his wife.

Dr. Huntington, the family physician, remarked to his wife, "You had better call at the parsonage and remain with Mrs. Mershon to-night. I think the little boy will pass away before morning."

She, a lovely, Christian woman, did so. The anxiety of the night was intense. Before the dawn of the morning the spirit of the little fellow took its flight to the Good Shepard's fold. Father folded his arms about mother and mother folded her arms about father. Then both kneeled at the side of the lifeless little form and with broken hearts but sublime faith repeated together, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

This account I received from the attending physician's daughter, Mrs. Mary Huntington Bridge, who heard it from her own mother's lips, and who was a witness to that pathetic yet spiritually triumphant scene.

"He hath made of thee a mourner,  
Like the Christ, that thou mayest rise  
To a purer height of glory,  
Through the pangs of sacrifice."

The irresistible magnetism of the Lord Jesus Christ reflected in every word and deed by such godly parentage led every one of their children into the

Christian faith, seven of whom are now with them in glory.

“But who can tell the rapture,  
When the circle is complete;  
And all the children, scattered now,  
Before the Father meet.”

East Hampton at that period was a town which had not only been well settled with the best elements of colonial life, but was connected up with world-wide industries and commerce. It was the seat of Clinton Academy, the first chartered academy in the State of New York.

The writer has a very romantic interest in Clinton Academy. Entering the Academy during a session of its classes to make an inquiry of its principal, the writer observed two new students sitting in rear seats of a class room. “Who are they?” the writer inquired. “They are young ladies from another part of the Island” was the reply. “But who is that one with the brown hair and dark eyes?” was the next question. “She is from Moriches” was the rejoinder. “I am going to set my cap for her,” was the writer’s prompt response, thought by the principal to be a jovial remark, but developments proved the contrary.

The writer secured through Miss Anastasie Williams an immediate introduction to Miss Addie J. Hawkins, the daughter of one of the Godliest parent-ages I have ever known. Our marriage followed and “this love at first sight” under the inspiration and blessing of God gave to me for but one year and forty-three days short of fifty years a happy, loving, consecrated wife, bound to me by the holiest tie on earth. During all that period she never once expressed a doubt of the goodness of God or of faith in our Savior or of a glorious immortality, into which blessed estate she has since entered. Her departure was vivisection to me, but glory for her.

“There is no death! What seems so is transition.  
This life of mortal breath  
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,  
Whose portals we call death.

“And though at times impetuous with emotion  
And anguish long suppressed,  
The swelling heart heaves, moaning like the ocean  
That cannot be at rest,

“We will be patient, and assuage the feeling  
We may not wholly stay;

“By silence sanctifying, not concealing  
The grief that must have way.”

The Pastors who had preceeded Rev. Stephen L. Mershon in the East Hampton pastorate had been men of great intellectual power and pulpit eloquence. The whaling industry was then at its height after generations of success and accumulated wealth. The town was alive with active and retired sea captains who had traversed the seven seas. They had explored the Arctic, brought importations from the Indies, navigated the waters of South America and repeatedly circumnavigated the globe. Their homes were profusely supplied with the silks of the Orient and products of all nations visited by American commerce, during the period when the sailing ships and especially the American clipper ships ruled the waves. The list of sea captains resident in and at that time hailing from East Hampton together with the capitalists who supplied the funds for the commerce referred to could fill a surprising space in this treatise.

Among the various commanders on sea and land domiciled in East Hampton I cite the following without discrimination, but only as a partial list of names: Colonel Parsons, Captain Howes, Captain Hand, Captain Hedges, Captain Miller, Captain Osborne, Captain Mulford, Captain Edwards, Captain Dayton, Captain Havens, Captain King and Captain Dominy.



In addition to the above representatives of trade and commerce on the high seas there were in Reverend Stephen L. Mershon's parish and intimately associated with him in intellectual fellowship and community activities, men and women of broad experience, deep research and well-defined positions in the fact and fiction literature of those times.

Mr. W. E. Akerly occupied the residence in which the bride of his excellency, President John Tyler, had previously resided. Mr. Akerly was a student of fine mental qualities with an excellent library and was a warm personal friend of the pastor.

John Wallace, a scholar of outstanding ability, gentle and retiring in disposition with profound religious convictions of the church of England type, suddenly appeared at his middle life in the village of East Hampton from parts then unknown, but generally understood to have come from Scotland. For many years and until the time of his decease, he dwelt in the community always commanding the highest admiration and deepest affection of its people. With an abundance of financial means, being received by him from time to time through a banking house in New York from unknown sources, he became a close, personal friend of the pastor. He entered in a quiet and unassuming manner, with great unction, into the intellectual life of that alumnus from Princeton. Mr. John Wallace, upon his decease, was buried by the spontaneous generosity of the parish and a beautiful stone was erected to his memory in East Hampton's Colonial burying ground. All of these expenditures were promptly reimbursed with words of gratitude and deep appreciation from an unknown friend over the seas, who subscribed thereto as "John Wallace's lady friend."

The secret of John Wallace, unidentified personality, was buried with him and in the hearts and

minds of a very few confidants. A wider knowledge of his prior life comes from no betrayal by those whom he trusted.

The writer as a small boy knew John Wallace and his very intimate relations with my father, Pastor Mershon, as I know also the secret of his life. I stand with profound reverence in the presence of John Wallace's tomb when I visit the old Colonial burying ground at East Hampton where rests the body of that statesman, scholar, voluntary exile, Christian gentleman—my father's friend, John Wallace.

Miss Cornelia Huntington was the brilliant, felicitous and intensely interesting author of the book "Sea Spray" in which she sets forth, in a quaint fascinating manner, the customs and characteristics of the inhabitants of East Hampton in the period referred to. "Sea Spray" is the outstanding literary product of that remarkable community; just as "Home-Sweet-Home Cottage" now fronting the Village Green in that town, is a monument to its former occupant—John Howard Payne, the renowned author of that immortal song.

Judge Henry Hedges, the author of the "History of East Hampton," has a permanent place in the invaluable field of local histories of the provincial period. Though residing in Bridge Hampton, he was another of Parson Mershon's intellectual comrades.

Squire Samuel Gardiner, well known as such, in the history and traditions of East Hampton was together with Madame Gardiner on most felicitous terms of personal friendship with my father and mother, the Reverend and Mrs. Stephen L. Mershon. Squire Samuel Gardiner was a lineal descendant and direct heir of Lion Gardiner, the first Lord of the Manor of Gardiner's Island, created under a grant from the English Crown. That Crown Grant was based upon the purchase by Lion Gardiner of the fee of Gardiner's Island from the Montauk Indians.

Squire Gardiner was a man of noble bearing, fine culture and thorough education. By family tradition, historic research and wide acquaintance he opened up to my father and mother an intensely interesting historical vista rarely available to students in the classical professions of the times in which my parents lived.

Another and most remarkable phase of life was an element of great and special importance and concern to my father and mother within the parish of East Hampton. There existed there-in at that time a large number of Montauk Indians. The remnant of that famous tribe lived upon a reservation on Montauk within the jurisdiction of my father's pastoral activities. Both he and my mother took deep, active and personal interest in the physical and especially the spiritual welfare of those survivors of that noble tribe, which had always been in peace and friendship with the East Hampton settlers. This happy inter-racial relation originated largely through the activities of that noble character, Lion Gardiner, the original Lord of the Manor of Gardiner's Island. Much credit is also due the colonial Pastor James representing the Christian principles which governed the early East Hampton settlers in their dealings with the tribe of aborigines from whom town lands were purchased and with whom the settlers were in continuous contact.

As an evidence of the powerful, spiritual influence my father and mother had over that tribe, I have in my possession now the last battle axe ever used by the Montauk Indians in warfare. It was presented by their King Pharoah to my father in 1857 as the most precious treasure owned by the tribe, and as a token of affection for my father's deep, active and constant interest and efforts in their physical and spiritual welfare.

I also have in my possession a bead bag made by the Montauk Indian squaws, especially for my mother because of her constant care for the comfort and happiness of the squaws and papooses in that tribe. Those two greatly prized gifts were presented to my father and mother with great ceremony and deep earnestness by what was then the pathetic remnant of a fast-disappearing and at this date a quite extinct race; overwhelmed by a white civilization.

A few citizens of East Hampton now remember the long, wearisome, sandy, mosquito-infested wagon trail extending for many miles across Napeague Beach en route to Montauk; most painfully, frequently and slowly traveled by my father and mother to take care of the members of that isolated and dying race. They will agree with me that the tokens of gratitude bestowed upon my devoted parents by their Indian friends were well deserved and were consequently greatly treasured by my parents until they were called to lay them down that they might receive their crowns of life, where the weary are at rest.

I have, in memory, several unique evidences of my father and mother's deep and abiding sympathy with humanity that are strong side lights upon their character. There appeared at the East Hampton parsonage door on one occasion a German who could only speak broken English. He was erect like a soldier, which he evidently had been. He had strapped on his back a wooden box in a manner representative of a knapsack. He saluted in military fashion with the opening remark, "Otto hungry. Otto has no place to go." It was also evident from his general remarks that he was mildly demented, yet of a quiet nature and disposition that met with a sympathetic response. Food was given to him and a comfortable place was prepared for him to sleep until a solution

of the problem could be solved in Christian kindness. The pastor and his wife knew the appalling character of public institutions at that time for those who were mentally ill, and decided that the stranger should not be subject thereto or incarcerated therein. Day after day the enigma was unsolved, until "Crazy Otto" became a regular guest patient in the parsonage asylum. The fellow occasionally talked to the stars. He went through military drills alone by himself in the orchard. On one occasion observing the parson's chickens invading the vegetable garden, entirely unnoticed he prepared and put knee-length stockings on all hens and roosters to keep them from disturbing the preacher's advancing crops.

"Crazy Otto" was not satisfied with such a minor token of his appreciation of the protection and care freely given to him. In the absence of Pastor Mershon, on one occasion, he harnessed the pastor's horse to a large wagon and disappeared. He returned in a few hours with a load of stolen firewood—all the horse could possibly draw, and stacked the wood up in the preacher's yard for his winter's use. It can be readily understood that an orthodox pastor had certain scruples about using stolen wood to keep the parsonage warm, but with all possible investigation for weeks upon weeks the pastor could secure no information whatever as to whose woodpile his protege had raided. The woodpile remained intact while a conspiracy of silence prevailed among knowing ones in the congregation. In the Spring one of the good elders of the Presbyterian Church of East Hampton called upon the parson and suggested that he did so to recommend an increase in the preacher's salary as he felt it was beneath the dignity of the Church and the reputation of the preacher for the latter to harbor stolen firewood for domestic purposes. My father immediately demanded of him whether he was the one who had kept him in sus-

pense through the entire winter and if so why he had not stopped Otto at the time.

The Elder replied, "Stop Crazy Otto? He could have taken all the wood I had; I never would have tried to do that." It had been a well-kept secret maintained as a joke on the preacher Mershon, and upon disclosure appealed heartily to the sense of humor which was largely developed in his nature. The account was settled by "the coin of the realm."

It will be remembered that Rev. and Mrs. Stephen L. Mershon's ministries in East Hampton covered that awful period in American history, the Civil War. This personal sketch will not permit of an account of the appalling tragedies experienced by pastor and people connected with that terrible event. The leaving of the volunteer soldiers for the front, the almost unbearable anxieties in the homes in the absence of news from the ranks and the intense sorrow over fallen heroes! During the darkest period of that horrible conflict word came that surgeons, nurses and other medical assistants were not being sufficiently supplied to meet the terrible conditions following a rapid series of battles in the South. My father and mother immediately gathered their children about them and placed us in the custody of our Grandma Mershon, the Sarah Lyon Mershon of this narrative. They then devoutly committed us to the Divine care and keeping. Both father and mother thereupon hastened, with her brother, Reverend T. Dewitt Talmage, to the battlefields of Virginia. There amidst the indescribable horrors of the Battle of Antietam and other fields of conflict, in the absence of any Red Cross organization but under the Christian Commission, they did what they could to minister to the needs and relieve the suffering soldiers of both the blue and the gray.

They especially sought out with their best ability and greatest energy the regiments and companies

in which the boys of East Hampton had enlisted. They neglected no stranger in order to reach a friend, but they did all that was humanly possible to aid and assist the sick and wounded soldiers from their parish.

If veterans of the Civil War, whose bodies rest on Memorial Day under waving flags in the cemeteries of East Hampton, could speak, many would testify to the kind and loving care bestowed upon them and their comrades by the pastor and his wife in the darkest hours of their dire need. We opine they now bear such witness "encamped along the hills of light" in the presence of the Prince of Peace, just as many a noble soldier in gray now resting under southern stars could bear like testimony.

"These were defenders of the faith and  
guardians of the truth;  
That you and I might live and love,  
they gladly gave their youth;  
And we who set this day apart to honor  
them who sleep,  
Should pledge ourselves to hold the faith  
they gave their lives to keep."

"If tears are all we shed for them, they  
have died in vain;  
If flowers are all we bring them now,  
forgotten they remain;  
If by their courage we ourselves to  
courage are not led,  
Then needlessly these graves have closed  
about our heroes dead."

The day of our parents' return from their blessed work of ministry among the stricken and suffering soldiers in Virginia was an eventful one in the East Hampton parsonage.

Childhood impressions of events in great crises of their developing young lives are prone to be clear and enduring. Mine are more or less vivid of our parents' safe return.

My two older sisters, my older brother and myself, a little urchin, were as I recollect it at play on the second floor of the parsonage when suddenly the main entrance door on the floor below opened into the hallway and we heard the voices of our returned father and mother, greeting our Grandma Mershon.

We youngsters made a wild dash to the head of the stairs and looking down the straight old-fashioned stairway, with its antique mahogany hand rail, we caught sight of our loved parents in the hall below.

Without one instant of hesitation, sister Sarah sprang down from the top step of that long flight; another took to the balustrade for descent, while two others, like rolling, bouncing balls in "hit-and-miss" fashion catapulted down the bumping decline, all illustrating the ever true but trite expression "love will find its way."

Our parents saw the avalanche of skirts, aprons, pants and blouses, with their intermingled youthful contents, descending toward them on a whirlwind of childish enthusiasm, beyond human control, and realized that not a moment was to be lost.

Father dashed halfway up the stairway and caught my then little sister Sarah flying in mid-air. Thus by air flight, balustrade transit, rapid turnovers in transmission and bump after bump on the protruding treads, we all collectively and quickly smothered our hearts and bruises in parental hugs at the foot of the stairs.

Love's reception was well worth the exigencies of love's impetuosity!

Is not this the way we sometimes rush pell-mell into the presence of a loving God and receive His big-hearted welcome even though we may have tumbled down steep places on the highway of life?

I have a theory about parental love—God endows all normal parents with a capital supply of human



love for their own offspring. This he does because of his overwhelming love for them and for their children. Those parents who keep very close to Him, He continuously fills to overflowing with His love for Him and for them. This united supply of intermingled human and divine love when poured by devout instruction and example into their children's lives develops their little ones in ever-increasing beauty of character as jewels in the Kingdom of God. "God is love!"

This is not theology; this is life. I know this for I saw it in my father and mother and in my brothers and sisters, seven of whom are now with our beloved parents in the realms of light.

What appalling responsibility rests upon those who have the custody of child life! What parent realizing this truth is not joyfully willing to devoutly consecrate his or her life to the spiritual culture of his or her immortal child?

The Reverend and Mrs. Stephen L. Mershon while in East Hampton parsonage received into their home for a time two daughters and one son of her brother, Reverend John Van Nest Talmage, the Amoy missionary's children, brought to America for education. The two daughters of Dr. Talmage remained in our family for a considerable period, then went for a time to their mother's family in Jersey City, while the son, David M. Talmage, remained with us until both our mother and father had passed to their reward and he had entered the Christian ministry for a time as a missionary in China and later as a pastor in America.

My father and mother also opened up their home and received as members of their family, several children of Colonel Daniel Talmage, my mother's brother, and for several years their education was under my father's general direction. One of the sons while with us, James R. Talmage, a young man of

noble character, when in bathing on the East Hampton Beach floated beyond the bathing limits into the deep sea and lost his life. This distressing accident and the account of the noble life of that young man is set forth in a special sermon delivered by my father, Pastor Mershon, which address is on file in the East Hampton Public Library.

In the early part of Rev. Mr. Mershon's ministry in East Hampton (1859) a great revival occurred in the parish and over one hundred new members were added to the church enrollment.

During his ministry, the present Session House was built to replace the old town house which until then had been used for devotional meetings. Pastor Mershon's recollections in his own words are as follows:

"I have a vivid recollection of some things when I first came among you as your Pastor. Among them are Prayer Meetings and lectures in the old town house. How the first who came was expected to go to a neighbor's house for the key to the padlock on the door; how all the light that was there was from the tallow candles which one and another brought with them from their homes. How the people sat, some on little children's benches and others on the desks or on the feet of those who sat behind them."—"From this class it was the funds were raised and work was done which built for you yonder Session Room which has been owned of God and made a rich, rich blessing to many immortal souls."—"I rejoice that it was built by you during my ministry among you."—"I thank God that it stands as one of the people's monuments of that period."

How strange, weird, fantastic, yet beautiful and holy are the emotions stirred in him or her who returning to East Hampton at the twilight hour and standing under the archway of its stately elms or majestic oaks gives free rein to memory and to history's appeal to the imagination.

God has lighted his stars in the heavens above it, clothed the earth with its bewildering robes of floral beauty within it, and spread the labyrinthian forests about it. His ocean tides blanket its hinterland with sea breezes of health and vigor. Our Godly ancestors in generation after generation inscribed their industry, love and care at every turn within the sacred precincts of that pilgrim born, colonial cradled and successively inherited village-by-the-sea—East Hampton.

How the tablets of time, in their records, reveal the entrancing story of the fellowship between God and man, as our forefathers in cooperation with Him made possible the comforts, joys and privileges experienced by us from the intermingling of divine and human love in bygone days.

He who walks the streets of East Hampton, worthily, does so with reverent mien, a thankful heart and a song on his lips; bearing the responsibility of maintaining the Christian institutions, physical, mental and spiritual, bequeathed to us by our forbears.

A sudden sound breaks the stillness of East Hampton's evening hour—it is the sound of a bell. It is not the deep, lower note of a cathedral chime that calms, soothes and quiets a disturbed mind and troubled heart. It is a higher note with a farther reach, and the hum of that bell moves out on wider circles with a keener call. It is the "John Milton" ship's bell in the belfry of the Session House—an amphibious bell—for it has the call of the sea, drowned for a time by the waves in the wreck of the "John Milton." It has the call of the upland, for tenderly and reverently it was lifted and dedicated in the belfry of the Session House by Pastor Mershon and the faithful of his parish, that it might ring out its notes of remembrance, invitation and warning. It has its tragic background which carries its own solemn re-

minders of passing time, present duty and oncoming eternity. Loved ones who reclaimed and dedicated it are waiting in realms beyond the storms to welcome their descendants who are here listening to the chime of this evening bell.

“Hear dem bells, don’t you hear dem bells,  
Deys ringin’ forth de glory of de lamb.”

In the wildness of a hurricane at sea following a tempestuous voyage, the fugitive, storm-driven, wave-battered ship—“John Milton” out of its course and helpless in the smashing seas, stranded in the surf during Pastor Mershon’s residence at East Hampton. Amidst raging billows, crashing masts, waveswept decks and engulfed cabins, with calls to men and cries to God, every sailor on the ship was swallowed up by the raging waters. Every tongue was silenced, but the tongue of the bell of the “John Milton.” Ever since that tragedy in the sea it has called to all within reach of its tones—

“Remember”—“Remember”—“Remember.”

What an appeal in the heart of East Hampton to the hearts of East Hampton and to the hearts of all visitors in East Hampton.

The people set apart a beautiful resting place in their old colonial cemetery for these total strangers cast lifeless upon their shores. Tenderly they bore them to their final resting place. Pastor Mershon surrounded by concourded people of that generous-hearted community gave these sailors of the sea Christian burial. Soon a beautiful monument arose above their silent forms as a witness to the tie that binds a Christian community to suffering humanity and to their loved ones in adversity though they be utter strangers in or from foreign lands.

The story of that tragedy is to be found in a Sermon on file in the East Hampton Library, preached

at the time by Rev. Stephen L. Mershon, the pastor in charge of the final obsequies.

We in no wise understand the eternal values attached to innumerable deeds of kindness and self-sacrifice, which, though long inert in God's storehouse of preservation, suddenly burst forth into full fruition in His own time and under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

When Pastor Mershon and his parishioners hung with care and prayer the ship's bell in the belfry of the Session House, they had no gift of prophecy by which to measure its influence for good in the years to follow. Such secrets are generally reserved by a loving God as surprises for the faithful amidst the joys of coronation day at "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Many years after that dedication service of the shipwreck bell and after Pastor Mershon and many who were with him on that occasion had been called to realms eternal, two intoxicated sailors, from a ship anchored at Sag Harbor, were staggering down the street of East Hampton in the evening hour. Suddenly the notes of a clanging bell broke upon the stillness of the night. A cry from the lost at sea!

"Ship Ahoy! Where you bound?" burst from the lips of one of the intoxicated sailors, so startled were they to hear a ship's bell sounding at "8 Bells" on an unnavigable street. They followed the call of the bell to the door of the Session House. No sea-going ship was sighted by them, but stationed there was "a gospel ship," its belfry, like a mast pointing heavenward and its ship bell intoning as it were John Milton's "Paradise Lost"—"Paradise Regained"—"Paradise Lost—Paradise Regained"—

"What's going on here?" they enquired. "A Meeting—come in," responded some now unknown native East Hampton messenger for the Lord of Glory.

They, at "8 Bells" according to sea time, took their places in a rear seat. The room was soon filled with people as the then Pastor Rev. John D. Stokes of blessed memory, the immediate successor of Pastor Mershon, was holding special services there. Aiding him as a musical support among others not now recalled were the trio, Mr. Otis Huntting, the beloved "Uncle Otis" so affectionately called by the church he for many, many years freely and earnestly served in such and other capacities; also, the Dayton sisters, then the Misses Libbie (now Mrs. Cartright) and "Dollie" (now Mrs. Mary Parsons of sainted memory) who from childhood had sung the gospel of love, joy and peace into innumerable troubled and weary hearts.

As the meeting progressed with increasing power and earnestness, one sailor "bet" the other sailor he could break up the meeting. Then followed a series of petty but distracting annoyances such as a cough, a dropped book and shuffled feet—creating a spirit of disquiet and unrest. As a song was being sung I went quietly as possible to the principal aggressor and bending over I whispered into his ear a passage of scripture. Annoyances immediately ceased and a season of blessed influences followed.

During the meeting a shower had developed. At the close I was stepping out from light into darkness with the rain steadily falling when I was suddenly seized by the arm and vigorously pulled under over-arching trees into the dense darkness prevailing in heavy shadows from the trees and storm clouds. I discerned that I was in the iron grasp of the sailor I had spoken to. He was sober now. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "I have been such a bad man. What you said to me tonight was what my dear mother in England so often said to me. I ran away from her and my home and have broken her heart. I am an awful sinner."

I said to him, "Don't tell me, tell God and tell him now." There in the rain, somewhat sheltered under the stately elm trees, on bended knees, he poured out his confession to God and we together pleaded for his pardon. Suddenly he stopped, looked up and with great joy exclaimed, "It is all right. I have given my heart to God and God has forgiven me for Jesus' sake. I am going to send word right away to my dear mother in England that her prayers are answered."—Paradise Lost—Paradise Regained—John Milton—

"Light in the darkness sailor  
Day is at hand,  
See o'er the foaming billows  
Fair haven's land."

We fellowshiped the next day in the Word of God and parted, he supposedly to return to ship.

Many weeks later a messenger came hurriedly to my then home in East Hampton saying, "You are wanted immediately at Gardner's Hotel. A man is there who has been terribly hurt and he will not let them take him away until he has seen you—He keeps calling for Mr. Mershon."

I rushed to the hotel and there on a stretcher lay our sailor friend who had been chopping wood in the forest, seeking to earn sufficient funds to return to his mother in England. The axe had slipped. He was awfully hurt. As I bent over him I recognized him and he me. He said, "I don't know whether I can live through this or not, but I wanted to tell you that no matter what happens it is all right between God and me—and my mother knows." They carried him out of town; he vanished from my sight.

Months thereafter the great hearted and beloved Charles Homans of East Hampton was driving with me in great haste from Sag Harbor to Bridgehampton. We slowed up to avoid a large tree which had

fallen on the highway. As we circled about it we saw a woodsman cutting away its branches. The identification was instantly mutual. He was our sailor wood chopper.

He sprang upon the trunk of the fallen tree, reverently removed his hat, turned his face skyward and lifting his right arm pointed to the heavens. There he stood in that reverent attitude—until we vanished from sight—pointing heavenward.

As “there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,” I wonder if the windows of glory were so open that Pastor Mershon and his faithful parishioners witnessed the scene of the sailors called to God’s house by the notes of the bell in the belfry placed there by them with care and prayer? Did they hear the sailor’s words of joy and peace and did they join in the angels’ song of joy over “the one sinner that repented”?

What seeds are now being daily sown by us in the hearts and lives of those about us for fruitage in God’s own time to be recorded later on in the records of heaven? To live day by day is to challenge eternal destinies!

During that same period of Pastor Mershon’s ministry a new church, the present very commodious structure, was also built.

I adopt again his own words in describing the splendid cooperation between pastor and the East Hampton people as follows:

“Your Session Room for prayer, your sanctuary for the assembling of the great congregation, your parsonage commodious, convenient and comfortable, all so tell that as a people, you have taken a deep interest in the cause of religion. And what affords me real pleasure is to say on this occasion that you owe not a dollar for any of these things which you have done within the past twelve years; and, in addition, you have an income from the pews which full doubles the amount you had when I was called



to be your pastor, and that too, notwithstanding an entire congregation has gone off from you who nobly bear a burden equal to that which you all together were bearing twelve years ago."

This final reference by the pastor was to the organization and establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the village of Amagansett, theretofore a part of the pastor's parish. With the united sympathy and cooperation of the East Hampton pastor and people the present church in that village was then established with over one hundred charter members.

The time came when notwithstanding a fully united church in the Session of which there had not been a divided vote during all his twelve years' ministry, Pastor Mershon felt that he should leave for another parish. This he did accepting the pastorate of the First Congregational Church in Birmingham (now Derby), Connecticut. His ministry there continued for about three years. He was exceedingly popular. He drew large congregations and gathered about him a wide circle of loyal friends, and became very active in municipal affairs, making his influence felt in all directions. At that time there was a great conflict in that community over the reading of the Bible in the public schools. The Protestant and Roman Catholic brethren were opposed to each other's opinion. It became an issue in which much severity of utterance by the indiscreet on each side prevailed. No one ever misunderstood Pastor Mershon's position on that or any moral question. His views were emphatic and pronounced and yet always expressed in Christian courtesy and respect. When shortly thereafter he was about to remove to still another field of work, the priest of the large Roman Catholic Church in Birmingham called upon him at the parsonage to bid him farewell and expressed to him in unbounded terms his appreciation of the

splendid and helpful religious influence he, Pastor Mershon, had exerted in the community at large and among all of the people.

When entering upon his pastorate in Birmingham (Derby) sectarian feeling was very strongly in evidence between the various Protestant denominations. "The Green" or park was in the center of the town. On one side was the Congregational Church; on the other side was the Episcopal Church; on the end was the Methodist Church and on the other end was the Superintendent of Public Schools.

Somehow, it seemed as if they had in their very location a menacing attitude, each one toward the others. Those were days of prevailing sectarianism, now happily largely past. Suddenly there broke out in the Methodist Church a great revival under the pastor who subsequently became a presiding Elder in that denomination. Upon this development, Pastor Mershon immediately called upon the Methodist pastor and said to him that he was rejoiced to see that God was especially blessing the work in that parish and that it was putting a great responsibility upon the Methodist Church. He then offered to join the working force in the Methodist Church as an assistant to its pastor during this period of great activity, and cooperate with him in bringing as many into the Methodist Church and fellowship as could be induced to confess Christ and join its communion. His offer was accepted. With all the intensity of his nature he entered as a reaper into that harvest in a sister church and denomination.

This special activity of the pastor of a neighboring Congregational Church, working as a voluntary assistant to the pastor of the Methodist Church and leading new converts into its fellowship had a somewhat shattering effect on sectarianism in that community. It was, however, only a natural and consistent move on the part of one who had in mind that

the Church of Jesus Christ is bound by no sectarian limits but centers in the Cross.

Reverend Stephen L. Mershon was, quite unexpectedly to him, called to the Dutch Reformed Church at Middlebush, New Jersey. At that time Middlebush Church was in the midst of one of the most prosperous rural districts in the State. The old church since destroyed by fire stood large, imposing and with a noble record. Middlebush is in close proximity to New Brunswick, where Rutgers' College was established and is now a University. In that city Pastor Mershon spent his early boyhood. It is not far from Princeton College, now a University, his Alma Mater.

Middlebush is not far from Bound Brook, my mother's early home and not far from Somerville, where my father took his academic course, and also Basking Ridge—Grandma Mershon's native town.

There was more, however, to Middlebush at that time than its environment.

Professor J. Newton Voorhees had established there his Academy, to which students flocked from surrounding communities, and where the Mershon children could receive excellent preparatory instruction for courses in colleges of liberal arts and in musical culture. This institution closed upon the decease of its founder to whom I owe a debt of profound gratitude for his recognition of the divine element in every true phase of human life.

Middlebush also contained many very representative families. Judge Ralph Voorhees, a man of outstanding culture and an exemplary Christian character, was a resident there. Governor Werts' country estate was there and occupied by him much of the time. Mr. John De Mott, a lumber merchant and financier with business headquarters in New Brunswick, resided there. Mr. Jacob Wyckoff, of high standing throughout the Dutch Reformed Church,

not only was residing there, but soon gave one of his sons to Japan as a representative of Christian influence in Japanese education and another son to the Christian ministry, who also became later on a trustee in Rutgers's College.

The highly educated and cultured Mortimer Whitehead, a prominent official in the National Grange Organization, maintained at that time in Middlebush one of the most highly developed fruit farms known to that agricultural organization.

When Parson Mershon assumed his pastorate in Middlebush he was welcomed to an exceptionally large and commodious parsonage and the enthusiastic cooperation of the community at large. He became exceedingly popular with the young people of his parish and it was a common occurrence to see his study swarming with young people at the close of school and to see them following him in groups along the street.

During his ministry in Middlebush, which was terminated by his death, he built Seaside Cottage in East Hampton as the summer residence of his family. This summer home was maintained with wide-open, old-fashioned hospitality. At almost all times during the summer months its commodious quarters were crowded with invited guests both young and old. The hospitality of that home was especially characteristic of days gone by. It was a joyous place, but regulated by rules now considered unique in many respects, but retained by memory with great respect and pleasure.

Father's laughter with romping children on one floor corresponded to Mother's merry laughter with other happy young folks on another floor, and yet every day was opened with family worship. Sundays were by no means gloomy. They were radiant days in which both parents had great comradeship with their children and yet at a given time each child

was called upon to answer one question in catechism. Attending Sunday School was a fixed habit and church likewise.

It is a mystery to me how the mother of that large and active household found the time to read so many fascinating books and father to tell so many interesting stories to their children. In later years these are recalled with happy memories.

On Sabbath evenings at the Vesper Hour at a given signal the entire household would rally in the music room and have a grand sing together, led by mother's beautiful soprano voice, all joining in a wonderful chorus of joy and praise.

Rainy days were not days of gloom. When the weather was such that the young life was compelled to remain indoors one rule prevailed. Ten minutes were allowed for a game of Tag and Hide-and-Seek through the entire house—every door, closet and hall was thrown wide open for the free sport of youth. At a given signal "time up" all were halted and perfect restoration of order through the entire house was required of the young rioters.

"Then I smile and say to Mother, let 'em  
move the chairs about,  
Let 'em frolic in the parlor, let 'em  
shove the tables out,  
Just so long as they are near us, jus' so  
long as they will stay  
By the fireplace we are keepin', harm will  
never come their way,  
An' you'll never hear me grumble at the  
bills that keep me poor,  
It's the finest part o' livin'—that's  
what home's intended for."

On an occasion when my father was enjoying his vacation at Seaside Cottage in East Hampton with swarming youngsters about him and a number of invited guests in our home, he gave notice that he must return for a few days to Middlebush to attend

the Sunday School picnic in his parish. Conferences were held by friends of the young people and they responded: "We will contribute \$50.00 to your New Jersey pastoral work if you will stay with us here." Father declined the proposition. Another short conference was held. The offer was increased to \$100.00, and while surprised at the generous proposal he felt he must go. When the offer was increased, however, to \$150.00 the Pastor felt that such a sum would do the needy in his congregation more good than his personal presence at its picnic and surrendered to the attack, remaining with the young people for the few extra days which otherwise would have shortened his stay with them.

This incident here related shows Father's magnetic influence over the lives of those with whom he came in contact and especially the young people in the communities in which he served as pastor and in social circles in which he moved.

As already shown in this biography of Pastor Mershon, he displayed mechanical genius in shoeing a horse for an atheist blacksmith and finished the job by converting that mechanic to his Lord and Master. He had remarkable qualifications in both directions.

During the period when he and my mother rushed to the battlefields of Virginia on their errands of mercy and relief, he had reason to visit Fortress Monroe. It was stated by a commander that the remarkable credentials which he carried would have admitted him into the camps on both sides of the line because of the mission on which he was bent and the relief which he and mother brought.

When in Fortress Monroe an artillery officer suggested, with possibly some suspicion in his mind, that my father should sight one of the big guns of the Fort at a target far out in the ocean. He made his calculations and trained the gun ready to fire.

The artilleryman upon inspecting the range turned upon him a sharp look and a very direct inquiry. It was reported that had the gun been fired the target would have been destroyed.

It was often said of Pastor Mershon that a good business man was lost when he entered the ministry. The administration of the business affairs of his parishes clearly proved that there was a consecration of his business ability for a higher service and not atrophied talents or unused qualities of an executive mind lost to the common weal.

During one summer vacation at East Hampton, when Dr. T. Dewitt Talmage's five children were with my father and mother at Seaside Cottage, Dr. Talmage found it necessary to take his wife (my Aunt Susie) on a sea voyage to Europe for the recovery of her health. As my father was standing at the gang plank in New York bidding them Bon Voyage, my uncle, Dr. Talmage, turned to my father and said: "Well, Stephen, I have made my will and have willed you and Mary the care of all of our children, if Susie and I should not live to return." My father thereupon reported to my mother the possibility of the addition of these five children to the eight already possessed by them, and then remarked: "Dewitt and Susie have my best wishes for their return." This possibility nearly resolved itself into an actuality, as the vessel on which they sailed shipped a tremendous sea which flooded the cabins in a great storm and for several hours it appeared that the vessel on which they were sailing would founder in the waves.

Had this occurred father and mother would have faithfully carried out the bequest in her brother's will.

At a time when my father was absorbed in pastoral duties in Middlebush he received a telegram from one of the most prominent commercial houses

in the export and import of food commodities in New York, with branch houses in three commercial cities. It summoned him immediately to their metropolitan office. He arrived there early in the morning and upon reaching their office enquired: "What is the matter?" The reply was: "We are going to fail at three o'clock to-day." He immediately responded "You are not going to fail at three o'clock to-day!" Thereupon he plunged immediately into the impending crisis in their affairs, and, averted the disaster at their banks at the hour designated. He steered them through troubled conditions until confidence was restored and credit reestablished. Thereupon Pastor Mershon, without accepting financial compensation, returned to his parish in Middlebush to search for and conserve spiritual values which he deemed to be of greater importance.

"If nobody smiled and nobody cheered  
and nobody helped along,  
If each every minute looked after himself  
and good things all went to the strong,  
If nobody cared just a little for you  
and nobody thought about me,  
And we stood all alone to the battle of life,  
what a dreary old world it would be!"

My father, as is well known in the history of East Hampton, threw all of his influence into the development of its summer colony in that now famous resort, so that it should represent the highest and best type of American citizenship and be of great credit and benefit to that community. This very greatly aided in the establishment of the social order which subsequently very substantially represented his ambition in that respect.

In the height of my parents' glorious ministry my mother was stricken with a fatal malady. All known human remedies and two major operations were of no avail.



My mother and her family finally realized that she was about to depart from her devoted husband and loving children. Free from suffering for a few hours prior to a calmly awaited but fully anticipated departure, mother and father in loving seclusion isolated themselves and conferred alone.

We cannot enter even by imagination into that holy of holies where those two divinely united souls, alone with their God, prepared each other for an immediate parting here to await a final reunion shortly thereafter realized in the Father's house on high.

The unutterable pathos of that holy tryst was sanctified by supernal peace.

When the door opened from that holy rendezvous together with God it seemed as if their tears of sorrow had been transmuted into pearls of great beauty by a divine radiance gleaming from their countenances, for it was a veritable transfiguration hour.

Somehow methinks that angels had ministered unto them in that garden of sorrows and that those celestial ones in ascending and descending had by divine permission left the gates of glory ajar and the Eternal had baptized them with celestial peace.

Two little daughters, one toddling about and the other a little mite larger, ran to her bedside at their mother's call. Placing one hand on each head as they looked up to her in love and wonderment, she said, "my dear little birdies I have left you in Jesus' care. You are safe."

Another scene was soon enacted under the same roof. One of her little boys was taken aside into another room and told that his beloved mother was about to go to heaven, and that he must be a brave boy for her sake.

He responded, "She must not die; she shall not die." Then quietly, unobserved, he stole his way up into the garret, where finding a place immediately over where his mother lay he thought he had gotten

in between her and God. He then knelt and tried to pray, but something said to him "you have no right to pray for your mother. You have not given your heart to God."

Oh, the tragedy when a boy cannot pray for his dying mother!

There was a suppressed call, "Stephen, Stephen, where are you? Your mother wants to see you." Hastening to her he found her alone by her request, awaiting her boy. Yet not alone! We close the curtain upon this scene. The dying mother had her boy between her and God, and in all the sublimity of the faith, love and prayer of that transcendent hour, that boy at his mother's side then and there gave his heart to God. Then from her lips he heard these words:

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,  
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

With a voice of seraphic charm she with her loved ones then all about her sang with a beauty never equalled by her when she sang as the soprano in the choir of her maidenhood church.

"Rock of ages cleft for me  
Let me hide myself in thee."

She then said, "I am very tired and must go to sleep. When I awake I will be in heaven."

We watched her as unconsciousness overspread her. Suddenly she awoke and with a joyous look of sublime expectancy exclaimed, "Am I yet here? Why, I thought that when I awoke I would see Jesus." The beauty of angelic radiance illumined her brow.

Surely, we caught in advance the vision of a soul's peaceful joy and triumphant eagerness when it awakes on heavenly shores.

Then we heard from her as if by an angel sung ;

“Jesus lover of my soul  
Let me to thy bosom fly.”

Mother then looked up with a longing gaze and calmly prayed in a clear and audible voice :

“Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

The gates of glory opened at once in answer to that plea and Jesus took her to himself as there fell from her lips in loving rhapsody, “Jesus, precious Jesus.”

All but two of her large family have joined her in the realms of light and those two abide in faith the dawn of that reunion day.

Oh, how father suffered and yet how gloriously we had all been transported into the very presence of a soul’s joyous entry into life eternal. Only those of us who have passed through such an experience as came to father can understand in any degree the measure of his grief or the power that sustained him in that hour of parting.

The large group of his loving but lively children were left heart broken and motherless. Dear old Grandma Mershon was moving on the ebb tide of life toward the port of peace. Father had on his heart the vast work he was doing for the Kingdom of God, and his people were without a pastor’s wife at the parsonage, with all that such a loss involves to a parish.

My mother had a niece bearing her own beloved name—Mary Talmage, the daughter of my mother’s brother, Rev. James R. Talmage, but not a blood relative of my father. She was of noble Christian character, cultured, educated and very close in affection to the family so sadly bereaved. My father took her for his second wife. She did not take my

mother's place for none, however truly loved, ever takes the place of another beloved one. A child born after the lamb of the flock has been taken to the good shepherd's fold does not take the place of the one previously there, but finds its own bower of love in the hearts of all.

Oh, the divine tragedy of father's nuptials! God only understands it; heaven only can reveal it. Not understanding, we bowed in faith to the wisdom of it.

Father was married to his second wife on Thursday and was dead on the following Sunday—a victim of pneumonia.

Draw the curtain on the earthly side. Faith clears the vista on the heavenly side. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter."

Maid, wife and widow in a few hours! Stepmother to a large family of children, she was still under her father's roof at Napanoch, N. Y., with the form of her and our loved one in silent and final sleep. His children, then her stepchildren, and his aged mother with broken hearts had been left as a minister's family, with little of this world's resources.

Here we have the sublime triumph of a noble faith, hope and love. "I will go back with you and be as best I can a mother to you children—a daughter to your grandma and do what I can together with you to help us all bear the loss of your loving father." Thus she spoke; this she did, and she was faithful to the end. A few short years and the heavens again opened and she was received out of our sight. Faithful unto death!

Grandma Mershon had remained at our Middlebush home and the news of father's going home to heaven was flashed there to Capt. Benjamin Totten. He went immediately to see Grandma Mershon, to notify her as gently as possible of father's crisis and its fatal termination.

As Capt. Totten entered the Middlebush parsonage Grandma said to him with a heavenly calm, "I know why you have come to see me. I know all about it. Stephen is gone."

I cannot but think that angels came and ministered to this saint of God and in that ministry revealed to her the glorification of her only son; or had the dear Lord spoken directly to her soul?

Then, from Capt. Totten's lips fell the finest tribute ever paid to my father's memory. "If Mr. Mershon had lived another five years every boy in this community would have been studying for the christian ministry."

"Be thou faithful unto death and  
I will give unto thee a crown of life."

## THE OLD PARSONAGE

The old Presbyterian parsonage of the Mershon and other pastorates in East Hampton, stood on the site immediately next to and south of John Howard Payne's venerated colonial Home-Sweet-Home and on the lot now occupied by the beautiful St. Luke's Episcopal Rectory.

The story of John Howard Payne's "lowly thatched cottage" of romantic charm has been perpetuated in his own words of immortal song. The influences from the old Presbyterian manse, its then next-door neighbor, have become eternal by sweetening the currents of community life which continuously flowed in, tarried a bit under its hospitable roof and then moved out of that happy abode of faith, prayer and joyous fellowship.

The gracious pastoral influences emanating therefrom are yet moving onward and upward in the hearts and souls of human life, which were then captivated thereby or subsequently became inheritors thereof. The ceaseless tide of ensuing generations has been enriched therefrom. It flows in steady course through the channels of time into the bowers of Paradise and on to where the gardens of God continuously witness family reunions and joyous welcomes, not "next door to" but into the "home-sweet-home" of the "Father's house of many mansions."

## THE PARENTS

SARAH LYON MERSHON—"Grandma Mershon" was the universally beloved mother of her devoted and popular ministerial son. The intensity of the tie between them beautifully illustrated the bond of filial love and maternal affection which binds two hearts that beat as one between parent and child.

REV. STEPHEN LYON MERSHON—He was the idol of his home, a magnet in the social life of the community and the faithful and fearless shepherd of his various flocks. "They that call many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."

MARY TALMAGE MERSHON—"Her children arise up and call her blessed, her husband also and he praiseth her" as now in two worlds they respectively express their gratitude to God for the blessed comradeship they had with her along the pathways of a beautiful domestic and parish life.

## THE CHILDREN

SARAH MERSHON—Sarah was the oldest daughter and eldest child. She bore her grandmother's name and became the wife of Ralph W. Brokaw, D.D., a clergyman of outstanding influence and usefulness in the Reformed and Presbyterian Denominations. He was also a Trustee of the United Society of Christian Endeavor.

Sarah, during the major part of her adult life, was a semi-invalid and much of that time was an intense but marvelously patient sufferer. Possessing the abiding faith of her father and the loving sympathetic nature of her mother she shed about her at all times the radiant light of the indwelling Christ.

Standing in the doorway of the First Presbyterian Church in Utica, New York, of which Dr. Brokaw was then Pastor, the writer watched Sarah's tottering steps as in physical weakness she was gently led to a waiting car at the close of a Sabbath morning service. A prominent citizen of Utica witnessing the scene said, "Do you see that little woman? She is the most successful minister's wife in the Mohawk Valley." Hers was "a life beautiful" now crowned with immortality.

GRACE TALMAGE MERSHON—Grace was the second daughter. Upon the decease of her parents and her own marriage to Frederick W. Hannahs, a merchant of Newark, New Jersey, she extended a motherly influence and care with her husband's enthusiastic cooperation over her younger sisters, brothers and a like filial devotion to her grandmother (Sarah Lyon Mershon) whenever such



loving service could contribute to their comfort and welfare.

Grace was exceedingly active in the Roseville Presbyterian Church in Newark, of which her husband for many years and until his decease was the honored Treasurer. Her religious activities were not confined to her own church but extended into hospital, home and missionary fields. Their beautiful home represented all the virtues and generalities of the old-fashioned, wide-open Christian hospitality.

DAN TALMAGE MERSHON—Talmage, as he was generally called, was the oldest son. He inherited from his parents a profoundly sympathetic nature and developed a deep religious character. In the various communities in which he from time to time resided, he was always known as a good Samaritan, instantly responsive to every worthy appeal. In commercial circles he personified integrity and fidelity to trust.

For about four years Talmage was Superintendent of the Bowery Mission in New York City. At the time of his decease he was President of an Electrolytic Art Metal Company in Trenton and an Elder in the Presbyterian Church at Bloomfield, New Jersey.

STEPHEN LYON MERSHON—Stephen, who bears his father's name, is the author of these biographical sketches. He was baptized by and in the blessed light of love bestowed by the members of the always happy, joyous Mershon family group. He deems it a sacred privilege to become their memorial torch-bearer, that the light of their influence may help to illuminate the pathway of others who seek a true destiny which is only to be found in the way of righteousness and in the path of Christian service.

MARY TALMAGE MERSHON—Mary married Henry D. Ames, a noble Christian ruling Elder. Mary? Yes, Mary Talmage named after her mother—Mary, the name sanctified by Bethlehem. Well indeed did this daughter carry within her and at all times display by her presence the spirit of the Mother of our Lord and that of her own mother whose devout living and Christ-like ministries as the wife of Pastor Mershon made doubly resplendent and magnetic his pastoral influence.

Mary, again like her mother, was a great sufferer for an extended period of time until release came when the gates of glory opened and she, as did her mother under like circumstances, entered therein. An attendant in the Oakland, California, hospital bending over Mary as she passed into the invisible said: "Had she lingered here another month everyone in this hospital would have been converted to God."

The peace of God was at all times in her uncomplaining soul and it seemed as if the glory of the Eternal Presence was about her as with a joyous spirit she became immortal. Shortly before passing away she whispered "When I get to Heaven I will drink deep of the waters of the River of Life."

DAVID VAN NEST MERSHON—Like a little angel that he was, David Van Nest came into the Parsonage home, the embodiment of a great and beautiful love. It was very noticeable that this little fellow in his cradle, when creeping on the floor and when held in the arms of loving care, by his happy expression, joyous laugh and sweet content seemed to typify our mental conception of the Christ-Child.

Little David Van Nest remained for not quite two years.

In the early dawn of a morning he was called; "for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." As he passed away his father and mother with bowed heads and bleeding hearts kneeled by his little crib and orally surrendered him back to God.

David Van Nest's baby spirit was the first of the family circle to enter the gates of glory in advance of those of his parents, brothers and sisters who have since entered therein. "A little child shall lead them."

His little body sleeps in the old Colonial grave yard in the very heart of East Hampton. He does not appear in the photograph of the Mershon family, having been called away before he could be photographed. Memory pictures him, however, happy in holy innocence, nurtured in love, untouched by worldly decadence and carried from parental arms to joys unspeakable—"to be with Christ which is far better."

**JAMES R. T. MERSHON**—James possessed exceptional ability, unusual energy and a passion to visit the world at large.

His final contributions to human happiness were in New Brunswick, where as City Commissioner and also as the head of its Welfare Department he brought about industrial activity and economic prosperity, together with practical and substantial relief and comfort to victims of misfortune and want.

When his body lay in state the city industries were silenced for a period out of respect and regard for his beneficial activities in that municipality. The writer observed that a very poorly clad, emaciated mother, with a babe in her arms, wrapping an old shawl about her, moved quietly up to where James' body lay and placed a beautiful rose on his casket as a tribute of love from the

hearts of the suffering poor to one who had remembered them in their needs.

As James was about to pass into the revealed presence of his Lord and when too weak to readily converse he caused his Pastor, who was at his side, to repeat the Apostolic Creed, to which paragraph by paragraph James responded in a firm clear voice: 'I do.'

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty maker of Heaven and earth;"

'I do'—

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;"

'I do'—

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead;"

'I do'—

"He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead"—

'I do'—

"I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins;"

'I do'—

"The resurrection of the body; and life everlasting."

'I do.'

What more should be said? "Faith of our fathers living still!"

Jesus said "He that confesseth me before men him will I also confess before my father which is in heaven."

"The promises of God are sure!"

BESSIE DE WITT MERSHON—God called Bessie to heavenly rest earlier in her life than he did in that of any other of the children, excepting baby David Van Nest.

Bessie's life was a continuity of Christian service joyously and happily rendered especially in the instruction of youth.

In Springfield, Massachusetts, and in the City of Utica, New York, she manifested a marvelous personal influence and a quiet unescapable control over the wayward and alleged incorrigible children in the public schools. It was but her manifestations of the spiritual magnetism from Him who drew the children to himself and which has always captivated child life when adequately revealed to it.

As Bessie was passing in to prepare for an immediate major operation from which she never recovered, a physician well known to her said, "Bessie, I am sorry to see you here." To this remark Bessie with an angelic smile on her face quickly responded, "Why doctor! Don't you know that it is easier to die than it is to live?"

Somehow Bessie seemed to be a thrill of joy here and so beautifully fitted for the life hereafter that God called her early to himself.

**EMMA TARBELL MERSHON**—Emma is the wife of Gerald R. Cushman and together with the writer we are the only surviving members of the family group. (1934 A.D.)

To us is the priceless heritage of bright, happy, joyous home-circle memories; an after gleam of that which symbolizes the home joys of all our loved ones who are in the mansions of light in realms not afar.

Emma is a constant reminder of her mother. Can a brother pay a higher tribute than that and especially the son of "that mother of mine?"

## A NEPHEW

DAVID M. TALMAGE—David was the son of Rev. John Van Nest Talmage, the veteran missionary of the Reformed Church in Amoy, China. Dr. Talmage was the brother of Mrs. Stephen Lyon Mershon (*née* Talmage). David, her nephew, was reared from early youth, educated and beloved, in this Aunt's and Uncle's home as if he were a son and brother, while his parents carried forward their great missionary work in China.

Upon ordination to the ministry David joined his father, two sisters and beloved stepmother in Amoy, China, until his health failed. He then returned to a pastorate in the homeland.

Faithful unto death.

EVER PRESENT

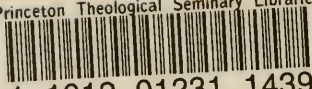
“How life-like, through the mist of years,  
Each well-remembered face appears!  
We see them as in times long past;  
From each to each kind looks are cast;  
We hear their words, their smiles behold;  
They're round us as they were of old—  
We are all here.”







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